

(12) UK Patent Application (19) GB (11) 2 121 673 A

- (21) Application No 8313416
(22) Date of filing
16 May 1983
(30) Priority data
(31) 386386
(32) 8 Jun 1982
(33) United States of America
(US)
(43) Application published
4 Jan 1984
(51) INT CL³ B65D 51/18
(52) Domestic classification
A4A 6C1 7A1X 7A2
7A5G
B8T CC
U1S 1785 1788 A4A
(56) Documents cited
GB A 2035275
GB A 2024608
GB 1480155
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GB 1362293
GB 1175176
GB 1007177
GB 0590575
(58) Field of search

- A4A
B8T
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(54) Improvements in or relating
to apparatus for serving, tran-
sporting and/or storing food or
the like

(57) Apparatus for storing and/or

transporting food and the like, com-
prising: a dish having an open
mouth; a cover removably disposa-
ble on said dish to close said open
mouth; and a seal 45 capable of
being simultaneously positioned on
said dish and over said cover. The
seal 45 has beads 50 positioned on
the central portion 46 in a generally
circular array, such that the projec-
tions 19 on the bottom surface of
the bowl will nest therein to enable
easy stacking of dishes for storage
purposes.

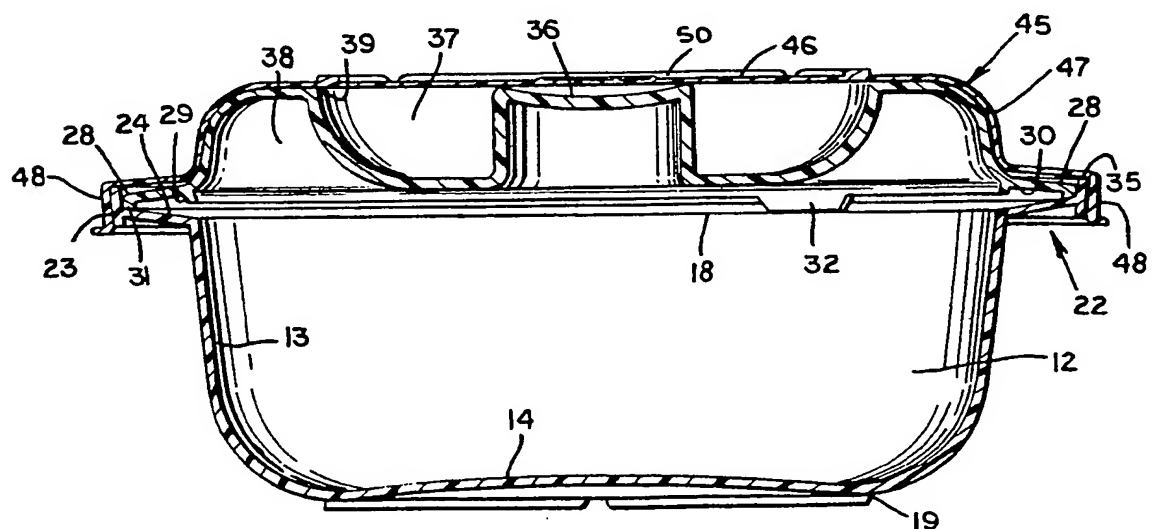
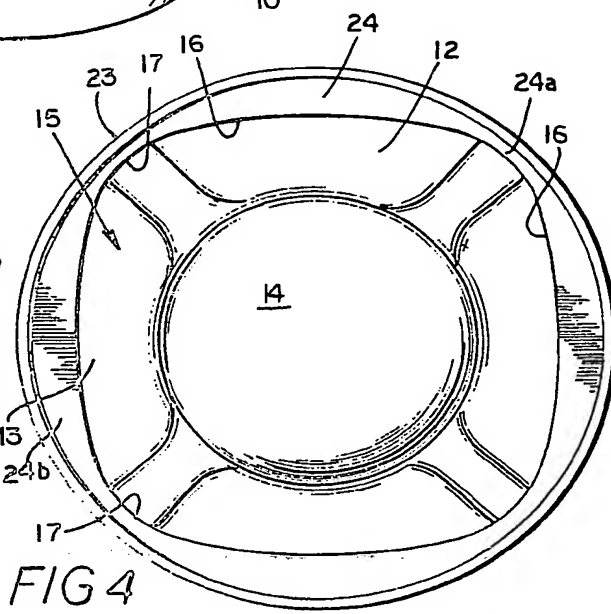
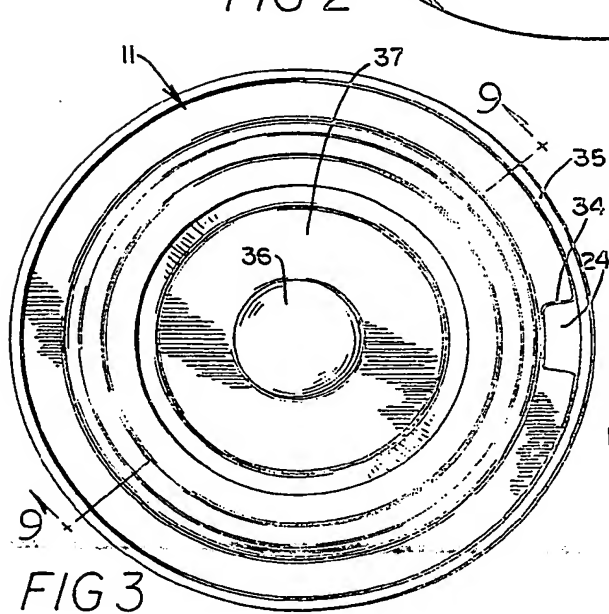
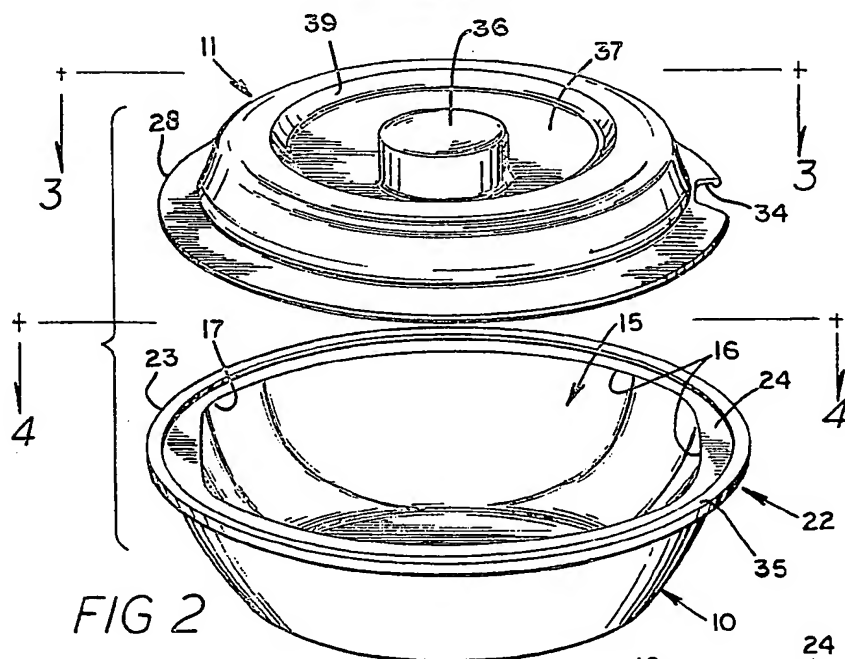
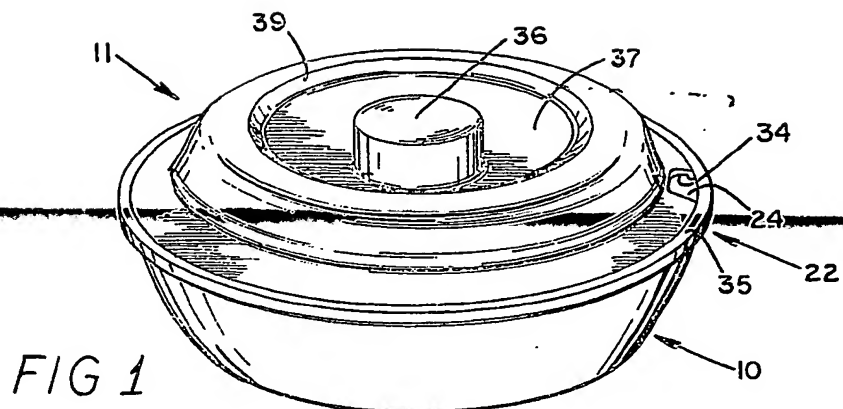


FIG 12



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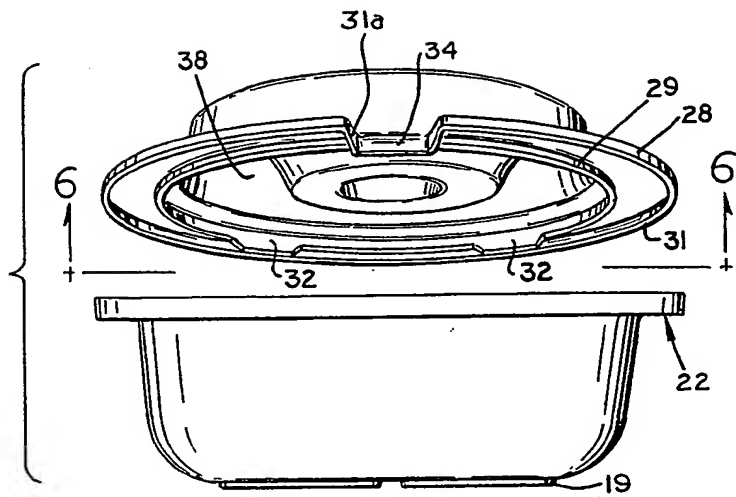


FIG 5

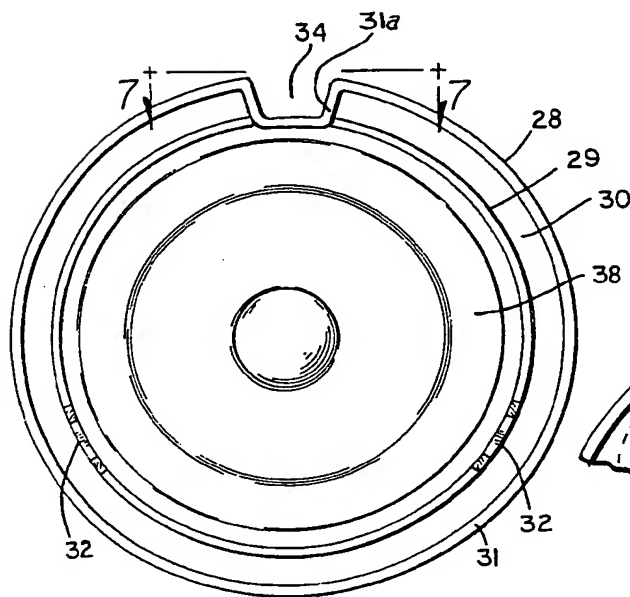


FIG 6

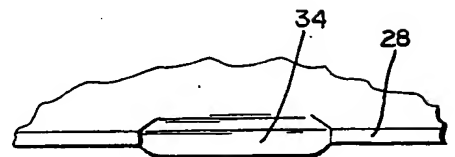


FIG 7

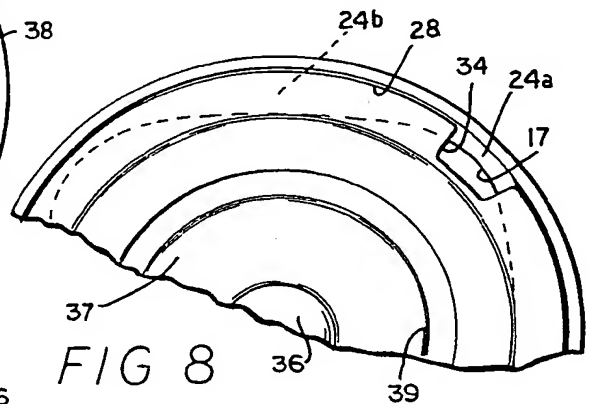


FIG 8

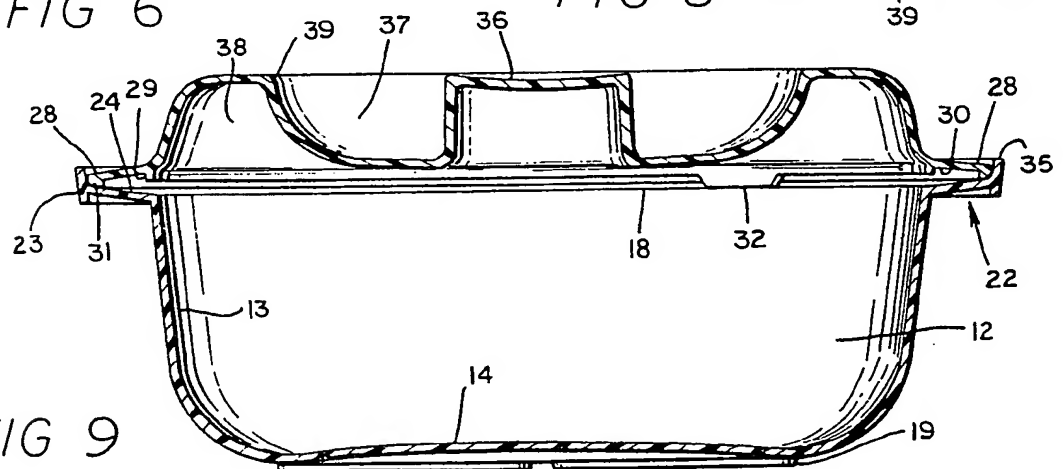


FIG 9

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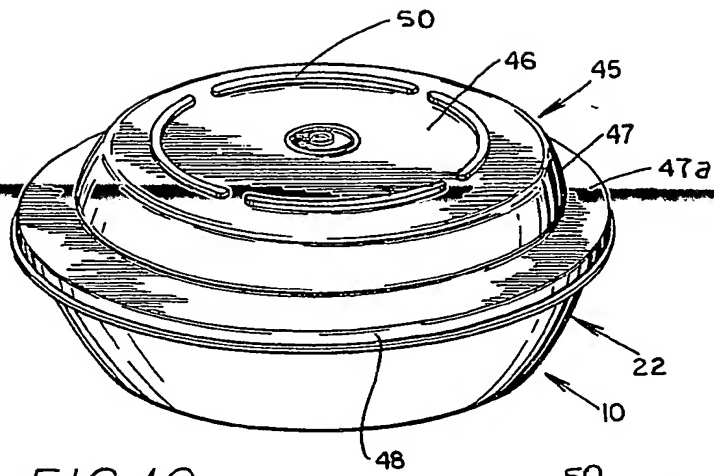


FIG 10

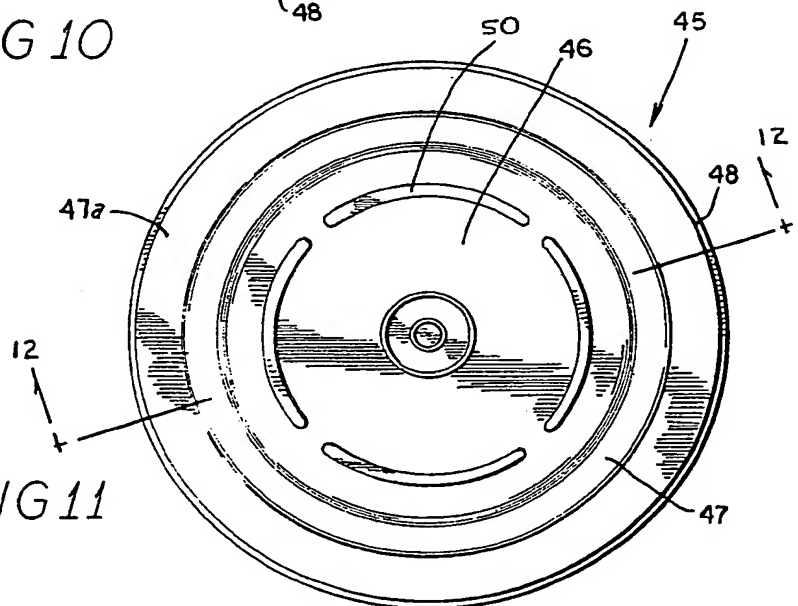


FIG 11

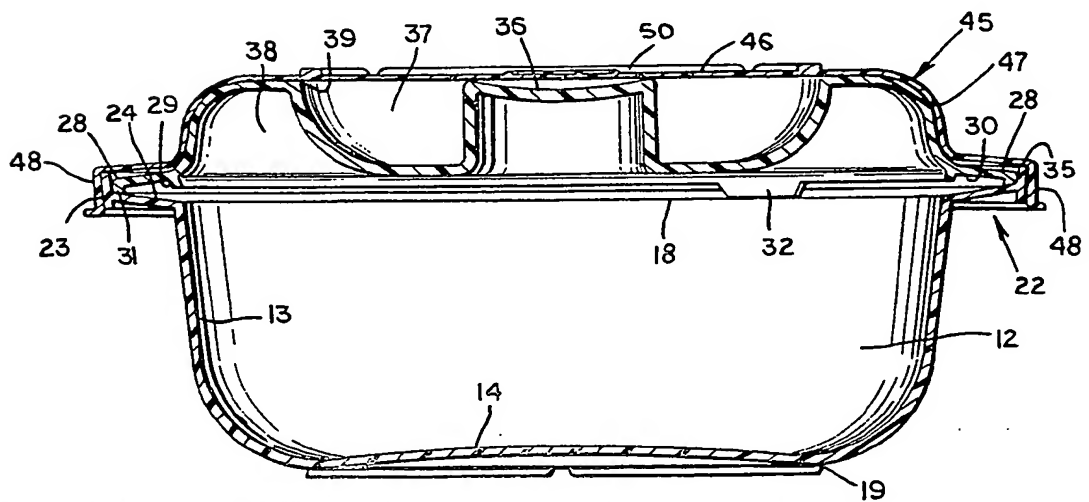


FIG 12

SPECIFICATION

Improvements in or relating to apparatus for serving, transporting and/or storing food or the like

THIS INVENTION relates to apparatus for serving, transporting and/or storing food or the like, and particularly to dish arrangements suitable therefore.

Dishes for use in baking and other cooking applications are typically equipped with a cover so that foodstuffs within the dish can be covered during cooking. Even if covered cooking is not desired the cover can be used to close the dish for storing or for transporting the dish and contents from one place to another. Typically, such a cover must be easily removable to facilitate entry into the interior of the dish during cooking. While a loosely fitting, easily removable cover is desirable for cooking such a cover is less desirable for storing or transporting of the dish and its contents. For example, a loosely fitting, easily removable cover must be held in place when transporting the dish from one location to another. If the cover is not held in place it may slip slightly ajar or come completely off if the dish is tipped, as would be the case when placed on an uneven surface such as a car seat. A loosely fitting, easily removable cover is also undesirable when using the dish for storing foodstuffs in a refrigerator or freezer. In such cases a more tightly fitting closure, such as a seal, is desirable to facilitate keeping the foodstuffs moist or to prevent freezer burn.

It has been proposed to provide one loosely fitting, easily removable cover for cooking or reheating and to provide a second cover for transporting or storing the dish and its contents. This solution has the disadvantage of requiring that the loosely fitting cover must be stored or transported separately. For example, one may prepare a recipe in advance and transport the cooked food to another location where it must be reheated before serving. This requires that both covers be moved from the first to the second location. When refrigerating or freezing the leftovers, the first cover, if it has been used during cooking, must be washed and stored separately. The loosely fitting, easily removable cover may have to be used again when reheating and thus it must be washed a second time.

The aim of the present invention is to at least mitigate the foregoing and other problems of the prior art.

Accordingly, it is an object of the invention to provide an improved dish for cooking, storing and transporting foodstuffs.

The invention provides apparatus for storing and/or transporting food and the like, comprising: a dish having an open mouth; a cover removably disposable on said dish at least in

one position substantially to close said open mouth; and a seal capable of being simultaneously positioned on said dish and over said cover.

Desirably, the outer perimeter of said dish is defined by a rim and said seal includes a peripheral edge portion which extends over said rim to cooperate closely therewith. Preferably, said rim includes an upwardly extending flange and said peripheral edge portion extends downwardly over said flange.

Said cover may have an opening therein, in which case means may be provided on said dish for blocking said opening whenever the cover occupies a predetermined closure position on the open mouth of said dish.

In a preferred embodiment, the dish includes a rim having a flange which defines the outer perimeter of the dish. The cover is of a diameter somewhat less than the inside diameter of the flange. The seal fits over the cover and includes a peripheral edge portion which fits snugly and securely over the flange. Thus the dish, cover and seal can be stored or transported as a single unit.

In order that the invention may be more readily understood, and so that further features thereof may be appreciated, an embodiment of the invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a top perspective view of a dish and cover arrangement;

Figure 2 is an exploded perspective view of the dish and cover shown in Fig. 1, illustrating the cover elevated above the dish;

Figure 3 is a top plan view of the dish and cover shown in Fig. 1;

Figure 4 is a top plan view similar to Fig. 3 but with the cover omitted;

Figure 5 is a side elevational view of the dish and cover of Fig. 1, illustrating the cover removed and being tipped upwardly to show details of the underside thereof;

Figure 6 is an underneath plan view of the cover, taken along line 6-6 of Fig. 5;

Figure 7 is a fragmentary view taken along line 7-7 of Fig. 6;

Figure 8 is a fragmentary top plan view of the dish and cover of Fig. 1 with the cover in place, illustrating an unblocked opening into the dish;

Figure 9 is a cross-sectional view of the dish and cover taken along line 9-9 of Fig. 3;

Figure 10 is a top perspective view, similar to Fig. 1, illustrating a seal in place on the dish and over the cover;

Figure 11 is a top plan view of Fig. 10, showing the seal in place on the dish and over the cover; and

Figure 12 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 12-12 of Fig. 11.

Figs. 1 and 2 illustrate a dish 10 having a complementary cover 11. The dish 10 and cover 11 are intended to be used, for

example, as a casserole dish or for other cooking purposes. Preferably, the dish 10 and cover 11 are made of any suitable material which can withstand both high and low temperatures, such as a ceramic, glass, metal, plastics or like material. Figs. 10-12 illustrate a seal 45 that is adapted to be positioned on the dish 10 and over the cover 11.

As best seen in Figs. 2 and 9, the dish 10 has a generally bowl-shaped interior 12 formed by a side wall 13 that is integral with, and extends upwardly from, a bottom wall 14. The bottom wall 14 is slightly convex at the center of the dish. Bottom wall 14 includes a downwardly extending projection 19 which is generally circular in bottom plan view. The projection 19 is preferably formed by a plurality of spaced projecting segments. The projection(s) 19 serve as a base to support the bowl, for example, on a flat surface. The dish 10 has an open mouth 15 (Figs. 2 and 4) having the approximate appearance of a square formed by outwardly-arcuate side portions 16 interconnected by rounded corners 17. The side portions 16 and corners 17 interconnect to form a continuous smooth edge 18 (Fig. 9) defining the open mouth 15 of the dish 10.

A rim 22 surrounds the open mouth 15 of the dish 10. The upper surface of the rim 22 defines an upwardly facing ledge 24 which extends from the edge 18 of the open mouth 15 and terminates at a generally circular flange 35. The flange 35 angles slightly outwardly and is defined at its outer extremity by an outer surface 23. The generally square shape of the open mouth 15 is circumscribed by the flange 35 of the rim 22. As a result the width of the ledge 24 varies between relatively narrow ledge portions 24a, adjacent the corners 17 of the open mouth, and relatively wide ledge portions 24b adjacent the side portions 16 of the open mouth.

As best shown in Figs. 1 and 9, an upper surface of the cover 11 includes a handle 36 centrally located within a surrounding depression 37, so that the handle can be readily grasped, using a potholder or other protective device, when necessary. The perimeter of the depression 37 is defined by an edge 39 which is generally circular in top plan view. A region 38 extends outwardly and downwardly from edge 39 to merge with an outer rim 30, of the cover 11.

The outer rim 30 is circumscribed by a generally circular outer edge 28. As best shown in Figs. 3 and 9, the diameter of the outer edge 28 is slightly smaller than the inside diameter of the dish flange 35 so that when the cover 11 is placed on the dish 10 the flange 35 prevents lateral movement of the cover 11. A first, circular lip 29 extends downwardly from the underside of outer rim 30. The lip 29 is concentric with the outer edge 28 of the cover 11 so that, when the

cover 11 is in place on the dish 10 the lip 29 is disposed approximately above the edge 18 of the dish open mouth 15. A second lip 31 extends downwardly at the outer edge 28 of the rim 30. When the cover 11 is in place on the dish 10, the second lip 31 contacts the ledge 24 of the dish rim 22 and supports the cover 11 on the dish. A pair of spaced lugs 32 protrude downwardly from lip 29.

The rim 30 of the cover 11 has a portion cut away to form an opening 34 extending inwardly from the outer edge 28 of the cover. This opening 34, as best seen in Fig. 6, extends inwardly a distance slightly short of the lip 29. The opening 34 is preferably sufficiently large to accommodate the shank of an implement (not shown) such as a spoon or cooking thermometer. The second lip 31 also includes a section 31a which defines the perimeter of the opening 34. In combination with the lugs 32 the section 31a forms a base for raising the rim 30 slightly above any flat surface upon which the cover 11 is placed.

Turning now to Figs. 10, 11 and 12 the dish 10 is shown with a seal 45 in place over the cover 11. The seal includes a generally planar central portion 46 and downwardly and outwardly extending portions 47 and 47a, respectively. Beads 50 are positioned on the central portion 46 in a generally circular array. The beads 50 are positioned such that the projections 19 on the bottom surface of the bowl will nest therein to enable easy stacking of dishes for storage purposes. As best seen in Fig. 12, the contour of the downwardly and outwardly extending portions 47 and 47a substantially corresponds to the contour of the outer region 38 and the rim 30 of the cover 11. The outwardly extending portion 47a is so contoured as to enable the dish rim 22, and the cover 11 and the seal 45 to be easily grasped between the thumb and fingers when these three elements are assembled. This facilitates installation of the seal 45 and transportation of the combined assembly. The outwardly extending portion 47a includes at its outer extremity a downwardly extending peripheral edge portion 48. As can best be seen in Fig. 12, the peripheral edge portion 48 is designed to fit closely over the flange 35. Thus the advantages of this arrangement become immediately clear. Using the seal 45, the dish 10 can be satisfactorily stored in a freezer or refrigerator with the original cover 11 in place. The dish, cover and seal can be transported from one location to another as a single unit. The tightly fitting nature of the seal prevents slippage of the cover during transportation. The contour of the outwardly extending portion 47a facilitates grasping of the cooperating dish, cover and seal between the thumb and fingers.

CLAIMS

1. Apparatus for storing and/or transport-

- ing food and the like, comprising: a dish having an open mouth; a cover removably disposable on said dish at least in one position substantially to close said open mouth; and a seal capable of being simultaneously positioned on said dish and over said cover.
2. Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the outer perimeter of said dish is defined by a rim and said seal includes a peripheral edge portion which extends over said rim to cooperate closely therewith.
3. Apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said rim includes an upwardly extending flange and said peripheral edge portion extends downwardly over said flange.
4. Apparatus according to claim 1, claim 2 or claim 3, wherein said cover has an opening therein, and means are provided on said dish for blocking said opening whenever the cover occupies a predetermined closure position on the open mouth of said dish.
5. Apparatus substantially as herein described with reference to, and as shown in, the accompanying drawings.
6. Any novel feature or novel combination of features disclosed herein.

Printed for Her Majesty's Stationery Office
by Burgess & Son (Abingdon) Ltd.—1984.
Published at The Patent Office, 25 Southampton Buildings,
London, WC2A 1AY, from which copies may be obtained.

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